

EISENHOWER BIRTHPLACE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

Denison, Texas

Pre-Visit Guide: Lesson 1

High School

Overview: A Good Civilian

In preparation for a visit to the Eisenhower Birthplace, students will examine World War II propaganda posters to better understand civic responsibility and the everyday American's experience on the home front. Students will also be introduced to the principles of historic preservation as an expression of civic pride and home front patriotism during the war.

U.S. History TEKS

(7) History. The student understands the domestic and international impact of U.S. participation in World War II. The student is expected to:

- (C) analyze the function of the U.S. Office of War Information;
- (G) explain the Home Front and how American patriotism inspired exceptional actions by citizens and military personnel, including high levels of military enlistment; volunteerism; the purchase of war bonds; Victory Gardens.

(17) Economics. The student understands the economic effects of World War II and the Cold War. The student is expected to:

- (A) describe the economic effects of World War II on the Home Front such as the end of the Great Depression, rationing, and increased opportunity for women and minority employment.

(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

- (A) use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions;
- (B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;
- (D) use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence;
- (H) use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons.

(30) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

- (A) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

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Materials

- Historic propaganda images for display/distribution
- Graphic organizer
- Eisenhower Timeline
- Eisenhower Birthplace Site Introduction video <https://youtu.be/yR5eQ6fXHB0>

Vocabulary

- **ally**: one associated with another to provide assistance or support. During WWII, the Allies (Great Britain, the U.S., the Soviet Union, and China) opposed the Axis powers (Germany, Japan, and Italy).
- **bond**: a certificate issued by a government or a public company promising to repay borrowed money at a fixed rate of interest at a specified time.
- **civic responsibility**: the responsibility of citizens in a society to exhibit certain attitudes and actions related to participation in society and democracy.
- **conservation**: preventing the wasteful or harmful overuse of a resource.
- **preservation**: the act of protecting or preventing the deterioration of something, especially archaeological, historical, and cultural sites and artifacts.
- **rationing**: allowing each person to have only a fixed amount of a particular commodity, such as food, fuel, etc.
- **U.S. Office of War Information (OWI)**: a United States government agency created during World War II to consolidate existing government information services and deliver propaganda both at home and abroad. The OWI operated 1942-1945.

Historical Context

Upon entering World War II, the United States embarked on total war, meaning that all sectors of the economy and the whole of society were dedicated to service in or production for the war.

"We are now at war. We are now in it—all the way. Every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history."

-President Roosevelt on December 9, 1941

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Propaganda to promote participation in the war effort and patriotism was everywhere. The U.S. Office of War Information was instrumental in pushing out messaging via radio, popular movies, advertisements and posters. The OWI kept citizens informed of the happenings on the war front and new wartime policies. New screen printing technology made the quick production of vibrant posters an important mode of communication to the American people. The communication and messaging work of the OWI is thought to have been instrumental in the Allied victory. The victory was also greatly aided by citizens on the home front. From 1940 until the Japanese surrender in 1945, the citizens of the United States produced more than 300,000 aircraft, 86,000 tanks, and 12.5 million rifles for the Allies. This was twice the number of war supplies of built by the combined production lines of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Activity: Civic Responsibility

10 minutes

As a warm-up activity, write the words “civic responsibility” and have students journal what the term means to them. They may also give examples of activities they consider related to civic responsibility. Share responses. Then ask students to discuss what they know about how the expression of civic responsibility may have changed or stayed the same since World War II.

Primary Source Activity: What’s the Message?

20 minutes

Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Distribute/display the **propaganda posters 1-22** and distribute the **primary source investigation organizer**. If distributing the posters, make sure each group gets various poster topics: investment, patriotism, espionage, rationing, conservation, volunteerism, jobs, production.

Explain that students are to identify the main ideas or messages conveyed in each poster. These propaganda pieces obviously exhibit bias, but they also illustrate activities and ideas that many Americans did, in fact, successfully take on for the war effort.

Essential Questions:

What do these posters tell us about civic responsibility messaging in WWII?

What do they tell us about the government’s expectations for citizens during WWII?

Have groups work on their poster analysis. If time allows, groups may exchange posters.

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Discuss each group's findings. Main messaging ideas should include rationing, conservation/recycling, production, job and service recruitment, funding the war through bonds, patriotism, dedication to victory.

Further the discussion by asking how propaganda is deployed in today's political, military, and corporate environments.

Primary Source Activity: Home Front Praise from General Eisenhower

20 minutes

Distribute/display the **D-Day Orders document**. Explain that General Eisenhower led the D-Day invasion of the beaches at Normandy, France on June 6, 1944. As a class, read the orders and discuss the following:

- **Eisenhower implied that much had changed between 1941 and 1944. What were those three changes?**
[The United Nations had beaten the Germans in battle, the air offensives had damaged German troops on the ground, and the Home Fronts had supplied the Allies with superior weapons and trained men.]
- **How were the messages in Eisenhower's Orders and the messages in propaganda posters alike?**
[threat of Nazi tyranny, absolute dedication to Victory]
- **Which groups are included in Eisenhower's "free men of the world are marching together to Victory"?**
[The United Nations, Allied troops, and all supporting Allied Home Fronts—This reinforces the Home Front messaging that civilian efforts "Back them Up" and "Keep them Firing."]

Activity: From Where Do Our Leaders Come?

15 minutes

Distribute the **media organizer** and have students complete it while watching the Eisenhower Birthplace **introduction video**. Share responses.

Additional questions for discussion could include:

- **What Denison retired teacher wrote to Eisenhower in 1942?**
[Jennie Jackson]

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- **During WWII, why might it have been important to the citizens of Denison to preserve the house where Eisenhower was born?**
[Answers may vary. Citizens of Denison, most importantly, wanted to claim as a “native son” the general responsible for Allied victory in WWII. Preservation of his birthplace was an expression of American and Denisonian patriotism and civic responsibility.]
- **What other prominent politician visited Denison with Eisenhower in 1946?**
[Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn]
- **Who took over the administration of Eisenhower’s Birthplace in the early 1950s? What was their connection to WWII??**
[The Gold Star Mothers, an organization of women who had lost their sons or daughters in the war.]

Assessment

Evaluate student participation in class discussions and group Poster Investigation Organizers for completeness and understanding.

Lesson Extension Opportunities

- Assign students additional research on one of the following WWII civic responsibilities: rationing, conservation, production, service, or investment.
- Have students explore propaganda posters, searchable online at the National Archives and the University of Minnesota Library’s UMediaArchives. Curate a class exhibition of WWII War Propaganda Posters. Have students lead the exhibit development process, choose themes to interpret, and incorporate interactive learning opportunities.
- Discuss and analyze the rise in veteran support charities as an expression of civic responsibility and response to war in the U.S. today. Have students research and choose a veteran support charity to present to the class. (<https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=531#>).

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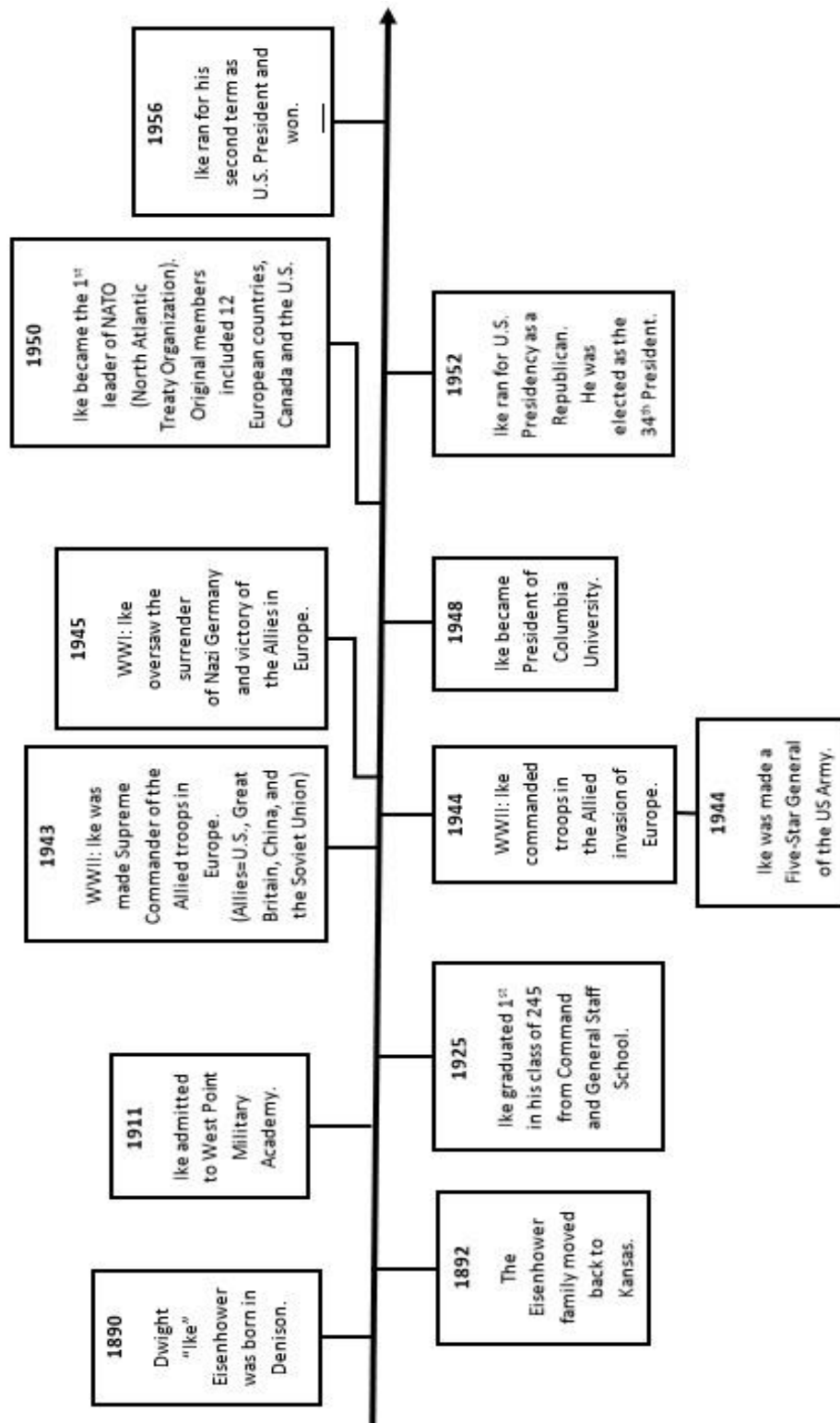
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Resource Image: Dwight D. Eisenhower Leadership Timeline



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Resource Image: Dwight D. Eisenhower giving orders, June 6, 1944

CREDIT: U.S. Army. "Dwight Eisenhower giving orders to American paratroopers in England." 1944 June 6.
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.



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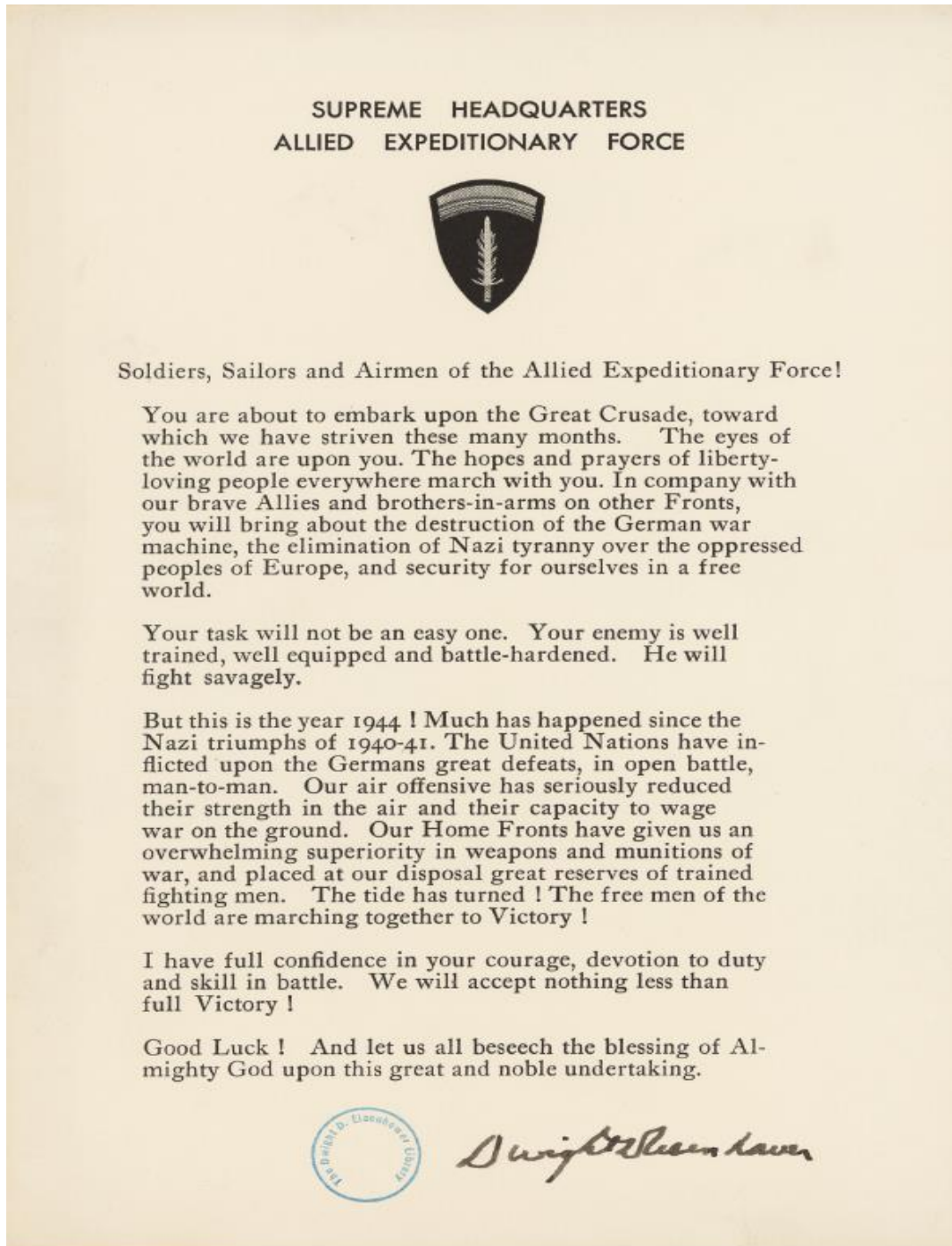
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Activity Image: Eisenhower's D-Day Orders

Citation: D-day statement to soldiers, sailors, and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 6/44, Collection DDE-EPRE: Eisenhower, Dwight D: Papers, Pre-Presidential, 1916-1952; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library; National Archives and Records Administration.



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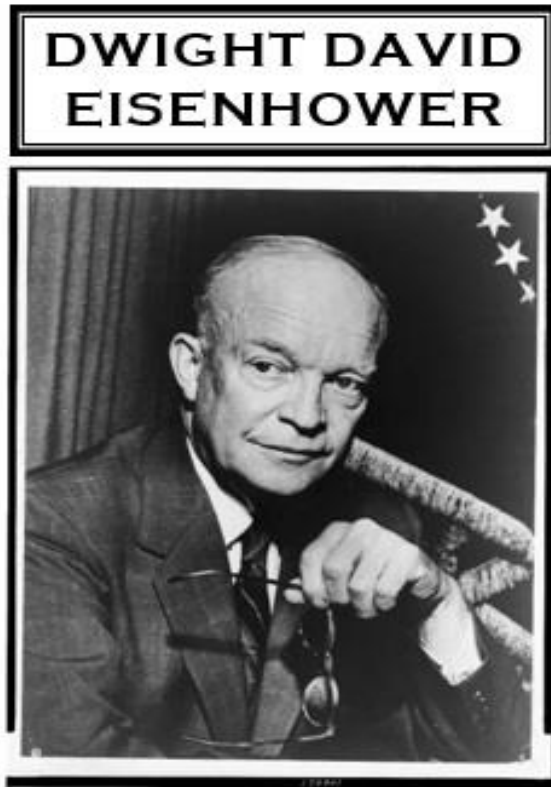
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From Where Do Our Leaders Come?: Graphic Organizer

Take notes on key facts while you watch the Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site's introduction video, *From Where Do Our Heroes Come?*



Credit: Photograph by *New York Times*. "Dwight D. Eisenhower, half-length portrait, facing slightly right, holding glasses." 1954, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

BORN _____ IN _____
(WHEN?) (WHERE?)

MOST KNOWN FOR...



FIVE FACTS

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

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What's the Message?: Graphic Organizer

Use this organizer to take notes on your propaganda poster investigation.

Poster Number	Main Idea	Emotional Appeals	Other Historical Information	Questions Raised

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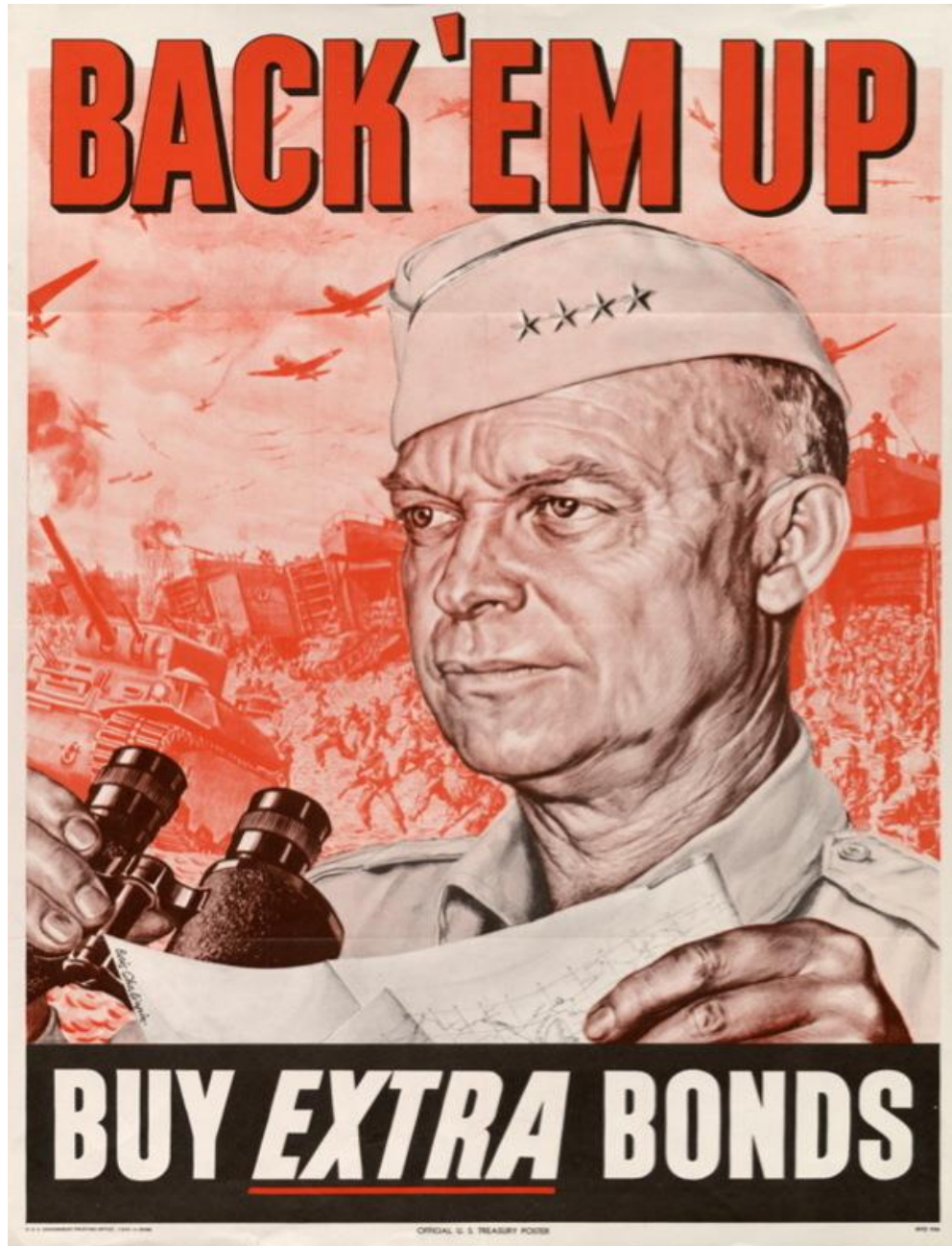
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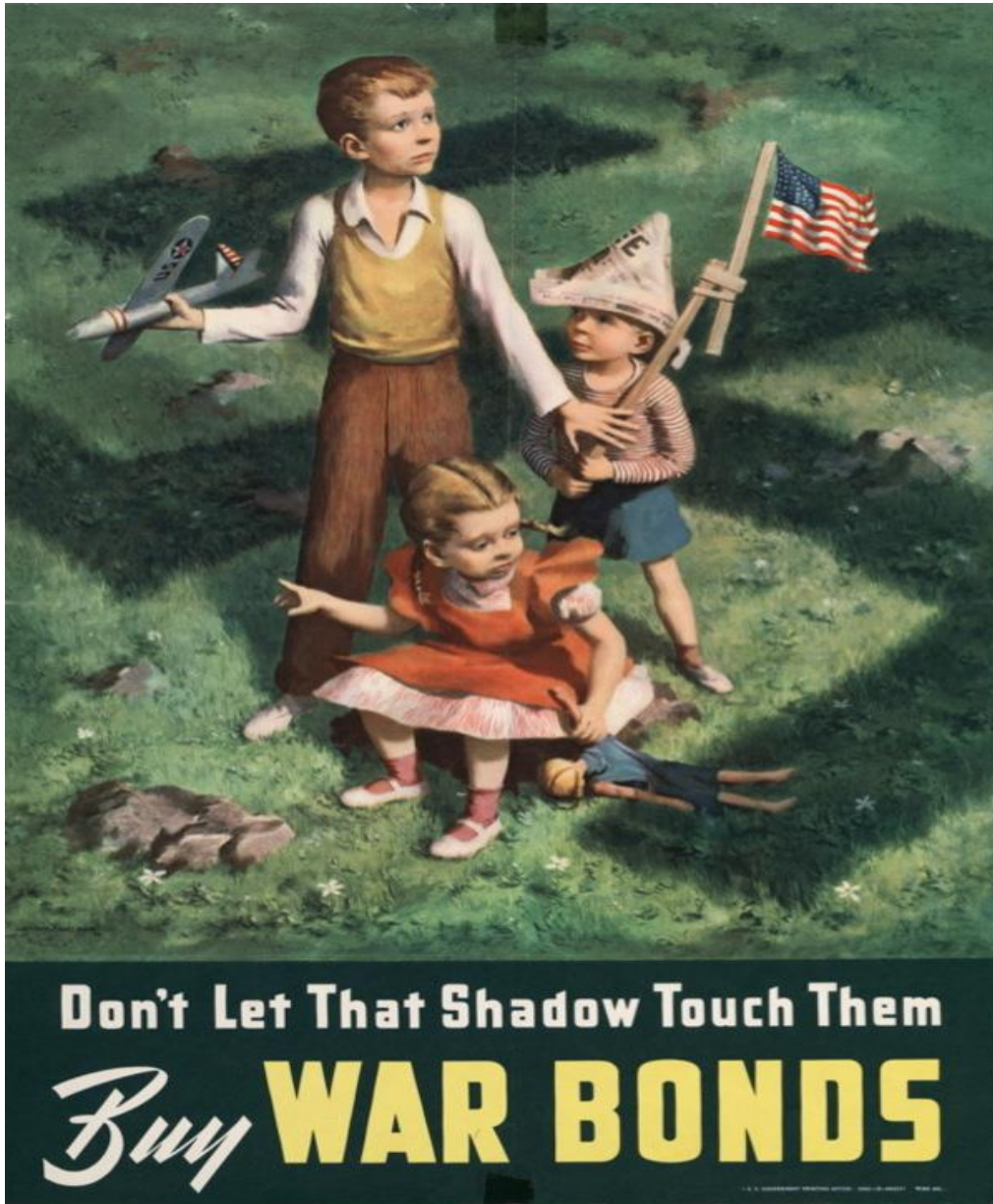
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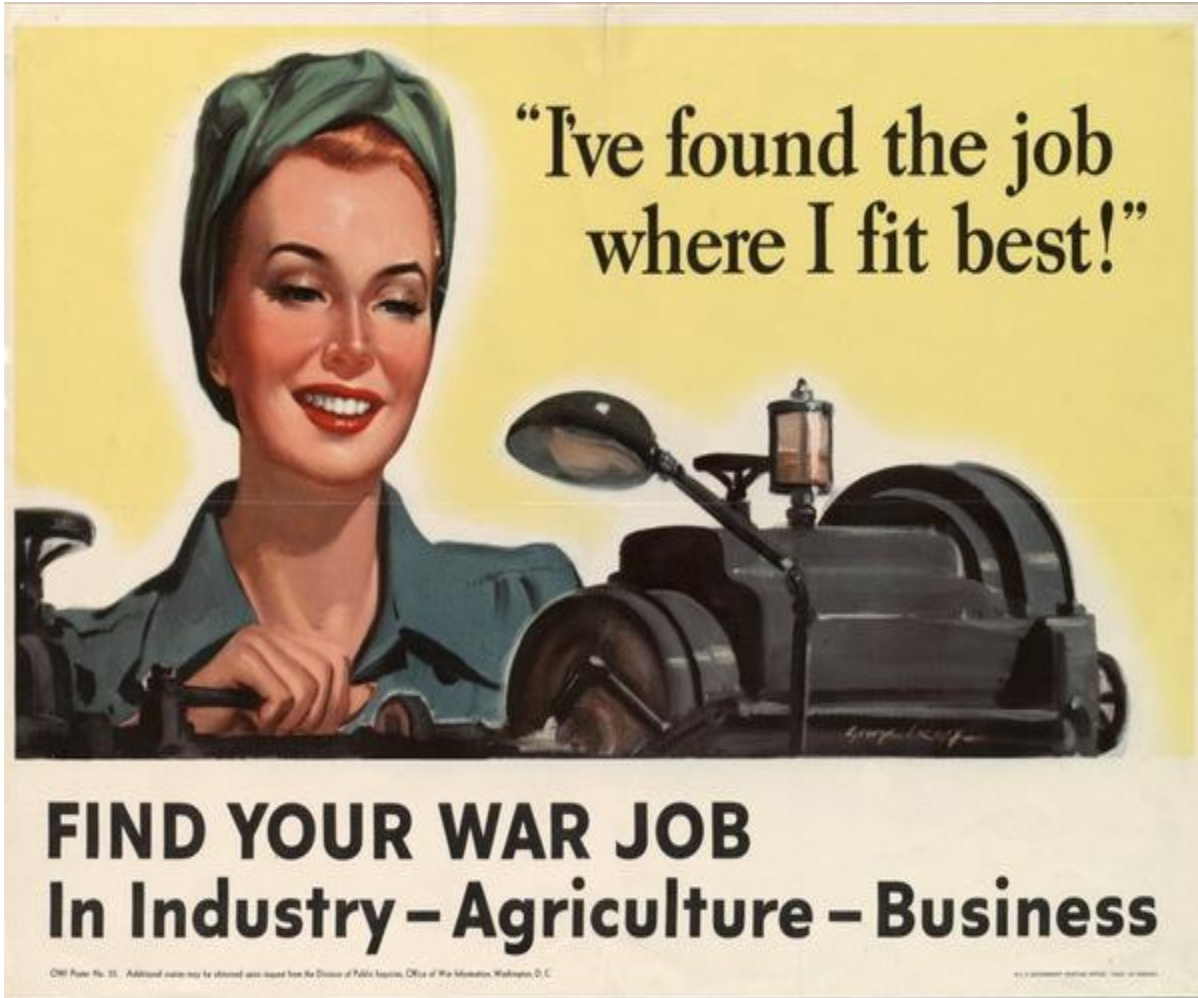
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WOMEN'S  BUREAU


WOMEN OF ALL AGES DO WAR WORK




AN ESTIMATED 1,000,000 WOMEN ARE NOW IN WAR WORK




TO GET WAR WORK—SEE YOUR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT OFFICE




THE ARMY HAS INDORSED WOMEN AS INDUSTRIAL WORKERS




HEALTHFUL WORKING CONDITIONS ARE A VITAL EFFICIENCY FACTOR




ON INDUSTRY'S FRONT—WOMEN FIGHT WITH THEIR HANDS




MANY OLDER WOMEN ARE EFFICIENT AS MACHINE OPERATORS



THE MIGHTY STEEL INDUSTRY—THIS GIRL INSPECTS TIN PLATE



THE EYES OF WOMEN ARE NEEDED FOR PRECISION WORK



IT TAKES SKILL TO OPERATE A TURRET LATHE

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Site Visit Recommendations

- Complete the pre-visit lesson or other introductory lessons prior to your field trip.
- Divide students into small groups, each with an adult chaperone.
- Make sure students bring pencils. Pens and markers are not allowed in the exhibits.

Information

To schedule a site visit field trip for your students, please call 903-465-8908.

For admission prices and hours of operation, please visit us online at <http://visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com>.

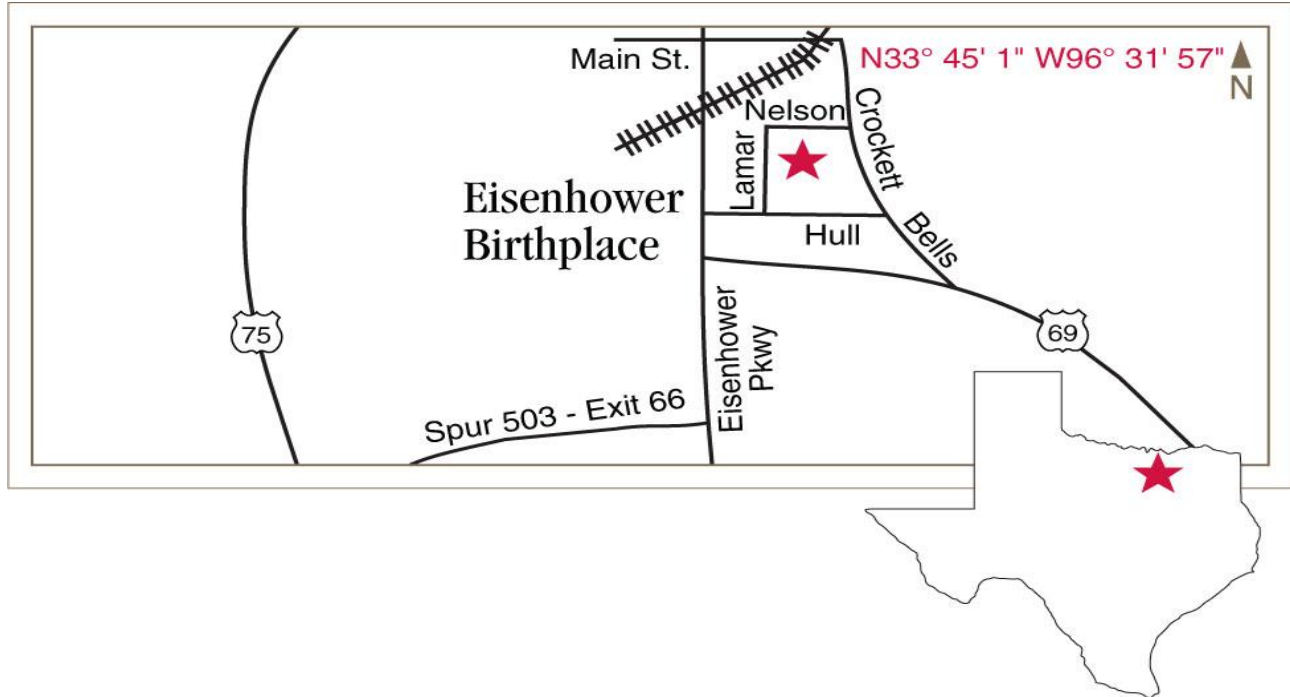
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